Committee to revamp PDS

2068. SHRI R. MARGABANDU:
SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of difficulties faced by the people in Public Distribution System, if so, the detials thereof;

(b) whether any committee has been appointed to study the difficulties;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether there is any proposal from Government to revamp the PDS; and

(e) if so, the steps in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) to (c) The Public Distribution System in India with a network of more than 4.5 lakh Fair Price Shops distributing five key essential items *viz.*, wheat, rice, sugar, edible oil and kerosene to more than 19 crore families throughout the country is perhaps the largest distribution network of its type in the world. It has been a major instrument for ensuring availability of these essential commodities throughout the country at affordable prices. PDS involves procurement of these commodities, storage, transportation to State godowns as well as upto the FPS level and subsequent distribution to intended beneficiaries involving various agencies/organisation of Government of India and State Governments. In a system of such magnitude difficulties faced by some people cannot be ruled out altogether. No committee has been appointed in this regard.

(d) and (e) Government has had discussions with State Governments under the aegis of Advisory Council on Foodgrains Management and Public Distribution wherein issues relating to better targetting, rationalisation of prices, effective monitoring system as well as other related issues on PDS were deliberated upon at length.

Based on the deliberations in the meetings and inputs received from the State Governments as well as from various quarters a series of measures have been taken:

(i) The allocation of foodgrains under TPDS to BPL families has been doubled for 10 kg. to 20 Kg. per family per month at 50% of economic cost and allocation for APL families have been maintained at the same level at economic cost. Additional quantities of wheat and rice, if demanded by States/UTs are considered subject to availability and at economic cost.

(ii) The allocation of levy sugar has been increased to 700 gms. per head per month w.e.f. 1.1.2000 in case of N.E. States and hilly States and the population base for making allocation of levy sugar to States/UTs has been changed from 1.1.1991 to projected population as on 1.3.1999 w.e.f. 1.3.2000. Further the income tax payees and their families have been excluded for the purview of PDS sugar w.e.f. 1.7.2000.

(iii) State Governments have been asked to make arrangement for distribution of PDS commodities in a transparent and accountable manner by involving Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in implementation of PDS. A model Citizens' Charter for PDS has also been drawn up and circulated to States/UTs for adoption with the objection to bring in greater transparency and accountability in the system so that subsidised commodities reach the targeted beneficiaries efficiently.

Offtake of food articles for distribution through PDS

2069. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the offtake of the food articles distributing through PDS has increased after the revision of PDS prices after this year's budget;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what are the steps taken by Government to enhance the offtake; and

(d) the details regarding the offtake from 1995-96 to 2000-2001?